FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL
PRESS RELEASE

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No excuses: sub-standard landlords told to clean up their act or face an immediate fine

Fenland District Council has strengthened its housing enforcement practices to crackdown on landlords who are not complying with licensing regulations.

Changes to Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing were brought into force by the Government in October 2018. This means that landlords need a license for each residential property that is rented to 5 or more people who form more than 1 household. Landlords also need a license if some or all tenants share toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities, or if at least 1 tenant pays rent (even if it is paid by their employer). With support from the Council, landlords have since had a reasonable time to comply with these regulations.

Whilst many landlords are complying with the new regulations, some are not. Over the last 18 months, housing officers from Fenland District Council have inspected nearly 2,000 private sector homes. Inspections have uncovered poor housing conditions with issues relating to fire safety, electrical safety and damp. 40 unlicensed properties were also discovered, with more expected to be identified as the inspection program continues. This has prompted the Council to introduce tougher enforcement practices to hold rogue landlords to account.

Now, landlords will face immediate enforcement action if their HMO is not licensed or if they are failing to keep the property in good repair. This may include the serving of an enforcement notice, resulting in a charge of £240, and/or a Civil Penalty notice, attracting fines of up to £30,000.

To avoid enforcement action, landlords and agents are being urged to check that they understand and are meeting all their legal obligations. By taking an active interest in their dwellings, landlords can ensure their properties remain in good repair and are occupied in accordance with their tenancy agreement.

Cllr Sam Hoy, Fenland District Council’s Portfolio Holder for Housing, said: “We know that many landlords in Fenland are following housing regulations and are providing good quality accommodation for our residents. However, there are individuals that have repeatedly chosen not to engage with us and provide decent accommodation, despite being given plenty of time to understand their responsibilities.

“The Council will not accept excuses for sub-standard property management and will immediately crack down on individuals who are not complying with housing regulations. It is only fair that costs are recovered from those who are breaking the rules - not the public purse and decent landlords.

“We will continue to use our powers to tackle landlords who continue to break the law in order to protect tenants from sub-standard housing conditions. The law is in place to ensure tenants can safely live in accommodation where they can stay warm and keep well.”
• To apply for a HMO license or find out more about landlord responsibilities, visit: www.fenland.gov.uk/HMO
• Members of the public and compliant landlords can report landlords who they believe to be operating a HMO without a license anonymously at: https://www.fenland.gov.uk/article/13753/Report-a-HMO

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For more information contact Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226